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**Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly**

# Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly

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# I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 65/315, the General Assembly decided to establish, at its sixty-sixth session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, open to all Member States:

(a) To identify further ways to enhance the role, the authority, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on previous resolutions and evaluating the status of their implementation;

(b) To submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

2. The present report and the recommendations contained herein are submitted pursuant to that resolution.

3. During the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Assembly appointed two Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations, Susan Waffa-Ogoo, and the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations, Alexander Lomaia.

4. Before the formal beginning of its work, the Co-Chairs of the Working Group conducted informal meetings with various Member States and representatives of a variety of political groups. During those meetings, the Co-Chairs benefited extensively from the insights and the ideas of Member States on both the substance and the technical and procedural aspects of the revitalization process.

# II. Proceedings

5. The Working Group held six meetings, on 27 March, 19 and 30 April, 10 May, 1 June and 11 September 2012.

6. The programme of work was organized in two practical stages, as follows: (a) general discussion and exchange of views; and (b) thematic meetings. The themes identified by the Co-Chairs for consideration in the four thematic meetings comprised:

(a) The role and authority of the General Assembly and its relationship to the other principal organs of the United Nations and other groups outside the United Nations;

(b) The working methods of the General Assembly, the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, and the agenda, as well as other operational and technical issues, including options for more time-effective, efficient and secure balloting in the General Assembly;

(c) The role and responsibility of the General Assembly in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as in the selection of candidatures for other executive heads of the United Nations system;

(d) The functions of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including strengthening its institutional memory, as well as its relationship with the Secretariat.

## A. General discussion

7. The Co-Chairs of the Working Group convened the first meeting of the Working Group on 27 March to allow for a general exchange of views. At the beginning of the meeting, the President of the General Assembly delivered an opening statement. In the course of the subsequent debate, 17 representatives made statements, including on behalf of various groups.

8. In his opening remarks, the President of the General Assembly stressed that the Assembly needed to adapt to current world realities to remain strong, efficient and effective. Being the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, the Assembly was also the most universal and legitimate body in the world. Much more progress therefore needed to be made in the revitalization of its work. One of the most important steps was to implement its own resolutions, which, the President underlined, was the responsibility of Member States. The President also called for innovative approaches to strengthening the Office of the President, both politically and in terms of resources. Turning to international peace and security, the President noted the Assembly's complementary role to the Security Council, pursuant to the Charter, and highlighted its role as a viable alternative for the international community to act in moments of deadlock. He mentioned in this context in particular that the Assembly's engagement and responses to new and emerging situations of common concern reflected the very mission of the Organization, and he presented practical measures for revitalizing the role and the effectiveness of the General Assembly. The President invited Member States to provide innovative and concrete proposals to further identify ways to enhance the role and authority of the General Assembly and noted that equal importance should be attached to the different elements of revitalization of the General Assembly.

9. Following the statement of the President of the General Assembly, the Co-Chairs, in their opening remarks, reiterated that they welcomed the decision of the President to adopt "United Nations reform and revitalization" as one of the four key pillars of the sixty-sixth session, noting that his many initiatives had already underlined the importance he personally attached to enhancing the role and the work of this body. The Co-Chairs underscored their intention to facilitate a fruitful and satisfying outcome to the deliberations of the Working Group, based on cooperation and transparency. They also indicated their intention to invite the Chairs of the Main Committees, pursuant to resolution 65/315, to brief the Working Group on their working methods. Briefings by the Secretariat on other matters related to revitalization would also be organized, as required, including on documentation. The Co-Chairs additionally encouraged delegations to further develop their views and present concrete proposals on revitalization in the course of the proceedings of the Working Group.

10. In the ensuing debate, delegations universally welcomed the Co-Chairs and the presence of the President of the General Assembly, and expressed their support for the objective of revitalizing the work of the Assembly. While many Member States were of the view that this could best be achieved by focusing on the political aspects of the issue, such as strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly, including its relationships with other principal organs, in particular the Security Council, as well as the selection process of the Secretary-General and the support for the Office of the President of the Assembly, a number of other delegations prioritized the

working methods of the Assembly, streamlining its agenda and other technical matters, such as documentation and the balloting process.

11. Common support, however, was expressed for focusing on the implementation of resolutions, which was indeed considered to be a matter of critical importance in its own right, and several suggestions were made as to how to achieve it. One group of States specifically emphasized its desire to identify the reasons behind any lack of implementation. Further, one delegation proposed that the Working Group agree on an implementation "road map".

12. Regarding the role and authority of the General Assembly, the Assembly's relationship with other principal organs again featured importantly, with many delegations opposing what they perceived to be encroachment by the Security Council. While one delegation suggested that the agenda of the Security Council was overburdened precisely because it dealt with too many issues that could be handled by the General Assembly, another was critical of, and concerned by, any proposal that would aim to dictate to the Security Council on its working methods, underscoring that the Council was co-equal to the Assembly.

13. On the selection and the appointment of the Secretary-General, a group of States, referring to Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations, renewed its call for the process to be more transparent and inclusive of all Member States and to allow for an effective and efficient participation of the Assembly in it. One delegation suggested that the Security Council should send a list of names of candidates to the General Assembly, rather than the name of a single candidate. The same speaker also suggested that the Assembly should decide this issue by a two-thirds majority, rather than the simple majority indicated in resolution 11/1, and it closed by insisting that the Assembly should also encourage formal presentations by and interaction with candidates. The same speaker advocated a stronger role for the Assembly in other senior-level appointments, a point supported by a number of other delegations.

14. On the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, specifically its institutional memory, many speakers underscored the extent to which the role and the activities of the President had evolved over recent years. They emphasized the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Office, including through increasing its budget and strengthening its institutional memory, and they thanked the President for having underlined precisely this point. One delegation linked this to the issue of ensuring equal opportunity to all Member States, developed and developing, to assume the presidency, efficiently and effectively. Another concurred that finances should not be an impediment. The issuance of *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly* during the sixty-fifth session was commended by a number of delegations as a notable contribution to strengthening both the Office and its institutional memory. More generally, the importance of the transfer of lessons learned and best practices was underscored.

15. Another issue frequently mentioned was mediation. A number of delegations pointedly commended the President for choosing as the theme of the sixty-sixth session "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means", as they felt that it emphasized the role of the Assembly in areas of international peace and security, including as a vital tool for conflict prevention and resolution. More

broadly, some speakers urged that the themes of upcoming sessions reflect the objectives of strengthening and revitalizing the Assembly and its work as well.

16. While a group of States suggested that focusing only on the procedural aspects and working methods of the Assembly would not lead to comprehensive improvement of its work, working methods were nonetheless very much emphasized by many others who looked forward to forthcoming briefings by the Chairs of the Main Committees and other related discussions. At the same time, a group of States took pains to reiterate the intergovernmental and inclusive nature that discussions on these issues must maintain.

17. Streamlining the agenda was an area of particular importance for those delegations wishing to see improvement in the Assembly's working methods. They focused on the biennialization, the triennialization, and the clustering of resolutions, and encouraged the elimination of resolutions on topics they deemed obscure, arguing that these undermined the credibility of the Assembly in the wider public domain. Suggestions were also made regarding the biennialization, the triennialization and the clustering of resolutions in the Main Committees, as well as streamlining aspects of the work of the Second and Third Committees with that of the Economic and Social Council.

18. Issues of documentation and balloting were raised. Regarding documentation, the need for timely distribution of the resolutions and records of the Assembly was reiterated, with a number of delegations highlighting the importance and the potential of electronic communication in timely document distribution. One group suggested that documentation management and timely translation would merit further attention by the Working Group, and that a briefing on technical aspects of electronic balloting would also prove useful.

## B. Thematic meetings

### The role and authority of the General Assembly and its relationship to the other principal organs of the United Nations and other groups outside the United Nations

19. The second meeting of the Working Group, which was also its first thematic meeting, was held on 19 April, and focused on the role and authority of the General Assembly and its relationship to the other principal organs of the United Nations and other groups outside of the United Nations. In the course of the debate, 17 delegations intervened, including on behalf of groups of States.

20. In their opening remarks, the Co-Chairs referred to their letter to all Member States dated 11 April 2012, with which they circulated a proposed programme of work for the Working Group. In the letter they had also invited delegations to refer to the annex to the report of the Working Group submitted at the sixty-third session (A/63/959) and to present views on the status of the implementation of those items related to the role and authority of the General Assembly and its relationship to the other principal organs of the United Nations. The Co-Chairs pointed out that non-implementation of General Assembly resolutions, in particular those adopted by consensus, could diminish the role and authority of the Assembly, as repeatedly noted by many delegations in the past. They also recalled the theme selected by the President of the Assembly for the general debate of the sixty-sixth session, "The

role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means", which had been timely in regard to the role of the General Assembly of effectively responding, in a timely manner, to emerging challenges and current events of common concern to the international community.

21. In the ensuing debate, many Member States reaffirmed their desire for a strengthened General Assembly, which they considered could be achieved by, inter alia, regular meetings of the President of the General Assembly with the Presidents of both other principal organs and subsidiary bodies; periodic updates by the President on his travels and briefings by the Secretary-General on his most recent activities; highlighting the work of the General Assembly, inter alia, through the convening of thematic debates; and ensuring that the programme of work of the General Assembly focused on the most important issues of the day. Lack of political will generally and encroachment by other organs specifically were cited by some as major obstacles to achieving a strong and revitalized General Assembly.

22. Regarding the relationship of the General Assembly with the Security Council, a group of Member States remained deeply concerned by the continuous encroachment it perceived on the part of the Security Council on issues that clearly fell under the functions and powers of the General Assembly, even in the areas of norm-setting, legislation, administrative and budgetary matters, establishing definitions and other matters not related to international peace and security. One point raised in this regard was the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, which the same group felt should be more comprehensive and analytical and include the views expressed by the members of the Council during the consideration of its agenda items. This group further called for the submission by the Security Council of special subject-oriented reports, though one of its members clarified its understanding that the General Assembly should first request such special reports from the Security Council. A subsequent speaker, on the other hand, did not agree with the suggestion that the Council's report was inadequate, noting that the report fully and factually reflected the annual activities of the Council. The speaker also warned against interference with the prerogatives of the Security Council, strongly emphasizing the need to respect the Charter. In a similar vein, another speaker stressed that the Council was co-equal to the General Assembly and that it would be concerned with any proposals that would try to affect this balance. That having been said, the speaker nonetheless supported increased cooperation among the principal organs to focus on the streamlining of their work and the reduction of overlap. It also urged the Working Group to focus on consensus issues, with tangible outcomes. Another group of States was of the view that the efforts of the Working Group on the working methods of the Security Council had contributed to further improving the reports of the Council, as well as the relationship between the two bodies.

23. One delegation, however, underlined that the General Assembly, as the only universal body, had primacy among the principal organs, pointing to the fact that the other bodies reported to the Assembly and that their members were elected by it. As a consequence, the delegation felt that the Assembly should be listed before other organs, including the Security Council, in all United Nations documents, including the *Journal of the United Nations*. It proposed that the meetings of the Assembly, which were posted alongside those of the Council, should be listed on the left, rather than the right.

24. Regarding the Economic and Social Council, a number of delegations commented that coordination between the Presidents of the two bodies was important and useful, including for the purpose of discussing their respective programmes of work. One speaker suggested that this discussion could include the post-2015 development agenda, and specifically the development of the sustainable development goals, but it cautioned that that should not result in any weakening of the Economic and Social Council.

25. A few comments were also made pertaining to the relationship of the General Assembly to the Secretariat, essentially highlighting the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations, which entailed the need to consult with and seek intergovernmental approval for any decisions taken by the Secretariat concerning the priorities and the objectives of the Organization, the structure and the functioning of its departments, and the budget as a whole. Some delegations pointed to resolution 66/257 in that regard.

26. A number of delegations welcomed the continued use of thematic debates as a tangible outcome of the revitalization process, encouraging their further and future use to focus on relevant issues currently faced by the international community. One speaker suggested that this significant achievement could be enhanced by organizing thematic debates around current events, as had recently been done with the debate held on disaster risk reduction. Another speaker highlighted the opportunities for exchange with civil society and other stakeholders that thematic debates offered.

27. A group of States noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Department of Public Information and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/66/730) aimed at increasing visibility of the General Assembly. It further requested them to continue to take appropriate measures to enhance world public awareness of the work of the General Assembly, including through facilitating and encouraging the media's reporting of its work. Another group of States underscored that the best way to achieve this was for the Assembly to focus on topical issues and take appropriate measures, including responses to new and emerging situations of common concern. This group also noted that briefings by the President on his recent activities were a valuable source of information.

28. The implementation of resolutions was considered to be a matter of critical importance, which a number of speakers noted with concern. One speaker suggested that the annex to the report of the Working Group submitted at the sixty-third session of the Assembly (A/63/959) be updated to reflect, in a separate column, the implementation of mandates. But a group of States felt strongly that the vast majority of the provisions under this rubric had been implemented or were being implemented on an ongoing basis. It also felt that provisions that could be considered as not implemented on substance could be addressed and analysed on a case-by-case basis. This exercise could then be reflected in the report of the Working Group and, if appropriate, in the resolution. To support its point, the group cited two specific examples, namely, the provision in resolution 51/241 to refer sections of the annual report of the Secretary-General for more detailed consideration by the Main Committees, which it felt had not yet been implemented but should be further examined; and the improvements already undertaken with regard to the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

29. Regarding the relationship with other groups outside the United Nations, a group of States reaffirmed that the General Assembly was the only intergovernmental body with universal membership and a broad mandate with far-reaching responsibilities in the context of emerging global challenges. It also welcomed the outreach made by recent Group of 20 presidencies to associate the General Assembly with its work in a process of thorough consultation and in a spirit of accountability and transparency. Another group of States, however, was more reluctant, and three of its members specifically and individually objected to such outreach, expressing concern at what they perceived as the vagueness of it, and fearing that it might undermine the role and authority of the General Assembly.

**The working methods of the General Assembly, the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, and the agenda, as well as other operational and technical issues, including options for more time-effective, efficient and secure balloting in the General Assembly**

30. The working methods of the General Assembly, the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, and the agenda, as well as other operational and technical issues, including options for more time-effective, efficient and secure balloting in the General Assembly, were the focus of both the third meeting of the Working Group, held on 30 April 2012, and part of its fourth meeting, held on 10 May 2012. These included briefings by the Chairs of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Sixth Committees on the working methods of those bodies, as well as a briefing on documentation by the Director of the Meetings and Publishing Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Both of the meetings were followed by question-and-answer sessions with delegations. In the course of the subsequent debate, statements were made by more than 15 speakers, including on behalf of two groups of Member States.

**Briefing by the Main Committee Chairs**

31. The Co-Chairs invited the Chairs of the Main Committees to brief the Working Group pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 65/315, which encouraged each Main Committee to discuss its working methods at the sixty-sixth session, and invited the Chairs of the Main Committees, at the sixty-sixth session, "to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group, as appropriate, on the discussions on the working methods".

32. The Chair of the First Committee identified the three stages of its work: its general debate, its thematic discussion and its action on draft resolutions and decisions. These, the Chair noted, had proven effective in managing the efficient operation of the Committee. The first stage, the general debate, was a standard feature of all Main Committees. The First Committee experience with it had demonstrated that it could be made more efficient through the use of a rolling list of speakers. In doing so, however, there was a need to find a balance between the desire of delegations to synchronize the availability of their high-level representatives and the need to keep the rolling list of speakers moving. This, the Chair suggested, was also an issue of using the conference resources wisely, especially at a time of budget austerity.

33. The thematic debates, which followed the general debate, needed further to improve interaction of the Committee with various stakeholders, in the view of the Chair. Such improvement could be achieved through increasing dialogue and

interactivity between the representatives of Member States, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and Chairs of disarmament entities. Another target area for improvement was the participation of civil society, the modalities of which could be further enhanced. During the session, the Chair noted, the Committee had had a lively debate on the participation of non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations, and informal consultations on this important topic would continue next year in the Committee. Thirdly, in an effort to avoid repeatedly adopting the same resolutions every year, unchanged consensus resolutions that had no budgetary implications could be adopted every other year, and thus ease the workload of the Committee. Finally, making the interventions of delegations more concise and trying to avoid repetition could help prevent delays in the Committee's programme of work.

34. There was also much that could be done about the third stage of the work of the First Committee, namely taking action on draft resolutions and decisions. It was important to make sure that drafts were action-oriented. The Chair, noting that some draft resolutions changed very little from session to session, suggested that these might better be converted into decisions, especially in cases where the draft contained no new elements. The Chair extended gratitude to those delegations that had done so during the main part of the sixty-sixth session and hoped that that positive trend would continue at the sixty-seventh session.

35. Another issue of increasing the effectiveness of the operations of the Committee concerned the greening of the Organization. In that context, the Chair supported efforts by the Secretariat to increase the use of electronic versions of documents. The First Committee had used very few hard copies in the conference room during the sixty-sixth session, and most delegations were getting their information from the working web portal of the First Committee, QuickFirst, a resource that could be further improved.

36. Finally, the Chair underlined that the Bureau of the First Committee needed to be formed well in advance of the Assembly session, in order to allow necessary consultations between various stakeholders in the disarmament process.

37. The Chair of the Fourth Committee opened her remarks by emphasizing that, while only two of the Committee items were not annual, it was generally felt that that worked well for the body. The Chair then outlined the Committee's particular practice of hearing petitioners, particularly on Non-Self-Governing Territories, noting that there had been only 65 in the sixty-sixth session, as opposed to 93 only a few years earlier. The Fourth Committee had also adopted an interactive approach in considering the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and related items, and it was working generally to enhance the interactive nature of its deliberations. Towards the same end, it had also, at the beginning of the general debates on various items, held interactive dialogues with high-level representatives from the Secretariat, as well as panel discussions. The discussion on the item "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all its aspects" was among these.

38. The Chair then stated that, in considering its working methods, the Committee had come to the conclusion that it was not necessary to rationalize items, and that it did not envision the possibility of clustering or eliminating further items at this juncture. Returning to this point in the question-and-answer session, the Chair commented that there was general consensus within the Committee that it already

had a concentrated approach and that its agenda was sufficiently streamlined. She acknowledged, however, that there was general awareness within the Committee that further effort could still be made to streamline the manner in which it considered items.

39. The Second Committee, as noted by the Chair at the start of his statement, was the only Committee at the previous session to have adopted a specific decision with tangible objectives geared to increasing the effectiveness of its working methods. The Chair also stressed that the Committee's effectiveness was an important determinant in the fulfilment of the United Nations development agenda. During the Committee's three-day general debate, a wide range of views had been expressed concerning its working methods. The Chair also noted that that was the first year in many that the resolution on trade had been adopted without a vote. Also, at the sixty-sixth session, the Second Committee had held six special events, which had proven to be exceptionally successful. The Chair reiterated that the timely election of the Bureau members was crucial, as were handover meetings between the incoming and outgoing members. Also important were timely debates that would leave sufficient time for negotiating and adopting resolutions. In this regard, the Chair underlined the need to respect and enforce given time limits. Another important related factor was the impact that the early appointment of facilitators could have on the work of the Committee. Regarding the latter, the Chair suggested that the Working Group might wish to address the issue of the participation of the European Union in the work of the Main Committees. He also argued that the periodization of agenda items could be further considered and welcomed.

40. The Chair of the Third Committee noted that, even though it had had fewer meetings during the sixty-sixth session, the Committee had successfully completed its work as scheduled, adopting nine more draft resolutions than it had in the previous session. The Third Committee had also heard a total of 855 statements, a statistic that, the Chair suggested, clearly reflected both the intensity of its work and the volume of its workload. The Chair particularly underscored the importance of electing the Bureau members in a timely manner.

41. Regarding the Committee's proceedings, the Chair noted that, while all items referred to the Third Committee were considered annually, the submission of some reports and draft resolutions had been biennialized. He also underscored that it was the intention of the Committee to proceed further in this direction, suggesting that further rationalization by clustering or joint consideration of items would also be desirable. Regarding the length of resolutions, one option could be not to repeat the same preambular paragraphs every year, but to refer to previous resolutions instead. Another possible improvement could be obtained by reducing the number of reports requested from the Secretariat, and to keep the focus of them on recent developments, progress made, challenges, conclusions and recommendations. Additionally, he suggested that, in the very rare situations when reports were not available in all languages within the six-week time frame, then every effort should be made to make them available, in their advance unedited version, in English only, on the website of the substantive department responsible for them. The Chair highlighted the late issuance of the finalized report of the Human Rights Council, owing to reasons beyond the control of the Secretariat, suggesting that it had hampered the work of the Third Committee and prevented it from having a more engaging and constructive session on the issue. He specifically noted the situation regarding the eighteenth session of the Human Rights Council, commenting that it

had ended a mere two days before the session of the Third Committee began. The Chair therefore suggested revisiting resolution 65/281, the outcome of the General Assembly review of the Human Rights Council at the sixty-fifth session, to allow the Secretariat to have sufficient time to issue the document according to schedule.

42. The Chair also suggested clarifying resolution 65/276, on the participation of the European Union in the work of the Organization, so as to avoid differences by major groups and Member States concerning the speaking order. He also noted the concern expressed by the Bureau and individual delegations as to the lack of availability of rooms and secretariat support for consultations, owing to the large number of informal consultations on draft resolutions. It was therefore advisable, the Chair noted, to review the support given to the secretariat of the Third Committee so that it adequately reflected its requirements. With a view to expediting information-sharing and promoting efficiency, the website of the Third Committee should be regularly improved, developed and utilized.

43. After outlining the remit and the workload of the Sixth Committee, its Chair began his discussions of its working methods by underscoring the timeliness of both its meetings and time allocation. He specifically mentioned the positive practice whereby periods during which no formal discussion was being held were used for informal consultations on its draft resolutions. In that context, he described measures he had taken within the Committee and its Bureau to ensure that all resolutions were discussed in at least one meeting of informal, open, transparent and inclusive consultations. Suggesting that there should be reconsideration of the need for annual discussion of some agenda items, he offered the possibility that these could be considered in summary form, without specifically raising the option of rationalization. Lamenting the frequent formality of debate in the Committee, he had sought ways to make it more interactive and substantive. He also suggested that there were some items, such as the rule of law, that might benefit from being discussed in greater depth.

44. The Chair then focused on the work of the International Law Commission, stressing the importance of it to his Committee. He underlined how important it was for delegations involved to receive its report well ahead of the beginning of its deliberations, as it was necessary for them to begin to study this material long before the item was discussed. To facilitate this, he suggested the possibility of having the International Law Commission meet earlier in the year. Acknowledging that its debate was also extremely formal, he urged that a way be found to make it more interactive. He also urged that the participation of its Rapporteur and of members of the Sixth Committee in it be facilitated, suggesting that at least some of its sessions should be held in New York. He also firmly underscored that analysis of the Commission report should not coincide with the analysis of other topics pertaining to legal matters.

45. Overall, the Chair was supportive of efforts to streamline the work of the Committee, acknowledging, inter alia, that further clustering of items might be possible. As had the Chair of the Fourth Committee, however, he felt more strongly that the Committee needed to reassess the manner in which it addressed issues, warning that if debate was not interactive, there would be no progress. He, too, urged briefer oral statements, which would leave more time for interactive debate and bring more focus to each topic.

46. Following the presentations by the Main Committee Chairs, one delegation suggested finding a mechanism to study the most interesting points made in the briefings, one that could be used to move forward specific proposals for further improving the working methods of the Main Committee.

**Briefing by the Secretariat on documentation**

47. In his briefing on documentation, the Director of the Meetings and Publishing Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management focused principally upon three points: the results achieved by the Working Group in this area through its previous resolutions; the question of accessibility of the visually impaired to United Nations documents; and the way forward. On the first of these, he made particular note of the mandate provided in three resolutions: resolution 55/285, paragraph 24 (b), for the Secretariat to provide electronic access to text of statements and reports, and, in the case of reports, simultaneous access to texts in all official languages; resolution 64/301, in which the Assembly encouraged Member States to make full use of the e-services provided by the Secretariat, taking into account the cost savings and the reduced environmental impact; and resolution 65/315, in which the Assembly encouraged the Secretariat to consolidate documents to avoid duplication. Between them, these three references, and the mandates they provided, had helped the Secretariat to achieve substantial savings and efficiencies, increasing its effectiveness as well.

48. The numbers of documents, pages and imprints all reflected this. In the last four years alone, there had been a 17 per cent reduction in the number of jobs handled (from 8,576 down to 7,342). The number of pages processed in the first quarter of each year had dropped from 103,644 in 2011 to only 89,722 in 2012, a striking decrease after the substantial increases of the few previous years. Most impressively, the number of pages printed in the first quarter of each year had fallen by 75 per cent over only the last three years: from 61,255,307 in 2009 to only 15,087,618 in 2012. In addition, both Permanent Missions and capitals were both increasingly utilizing e-services to download documents directly, more and more frequently without printing. The sum savings of this was $10 million in the 2012-2013 budget, much of which had been saved through the elimination of 148 different posts.

49. As to accessibility of official documents for the visually impaired, while the Secretariat had been fully committed to this objective, it had been much more difficult to achieve when it required working with printed versions. However, with the advent of e-documents, which could be modified much more simply to make them accessible, this was becoming much easier and much more achievable. Further, a number of the mandates given to the Secretariat in this area had also facilitated this process.

50. Lastly, in considering the way forward, the Director outlined a new business model based on four pillars: the portal; e-publishing; e-tools; and print-on-demand. As these became increasingly integrated, the benefits that would accrue from them would include greater sustainability; greater efficiency and effectiveness; greater accessibility; and an increase in knowledge management. The Director closed his briefing with a brief demonstration of the Papersmart system, highlighting the possibility of accessing it in all of the six official languages, its access for the

visually impaired, its organization by agenda item, and its use as a training tool for new delegates, through both the meeting videos and the documents it contained.

51. In the question-and-answer session, three delegations put questions to the Director. One was concerned at the number of posts eliminated and wanted to know more about it. The Director explained that as many of the posts as possible were being cut through retirement, with 20 of them having been achieved through redeployment elsewhere in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. A second speaker underscored the importance of having websites updated in all six languages and wanted to know what efforts were being made to achieve that. The Director pointed to the website of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) as an example of a website that the Secretariat was indeed maintaining and updating in all six official languages. A third Member State wanted to know what measures the Secretariat was taking to ensure that the documents being sent to Member States electronically were actually being received. The Director explained that, as of May 2011, communications were being sent electronically to Member States with a confirmation of receipt requested. Where that confirmation was not received, the Secretariat telephoned the Mission in question to be sure that the document sent had indeed been received.

**Interventions by Member States**

52. In general comments, one group of States devoted particular attention to the improvement of working methods, noting that, despite this being a focus of the Working Group for many years, the results achieved had been limited. While it noted that it was primarily the responsibility of each and every Member State to improve working methods, the group nonetheless remained insistent that this area was the one with the greatest potential for making real change and achieving a real contribution to revitalization. Noting that the consolidation of existing resolutions could bring real added value, it suggested that the annex contained in the report of the Working Group submitted at the sixty-third session (A/63/959) should be reviewed and updated and that Member States should take determined action to increase implementation. This inventory, which should be continued on a regular basis, should also include indications of non-implementation. In addition, the group felt that possibilities for further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items should be thoroughly examined, a position shared by a number of subsequent speakers. The leadership of the Main Committee Chairs in this regard, the group suggested, was of critical importance. An additional speaker further suggested an examination of possible measures to streamline the work of the Second and Third Committees.

53. Another group of States, on the other hand, strongly underscored that any such measures could not be conducted without a clear consent of the co-sponsoring States or of States concerned. Generally, this group underlined that revitalization was a political process, even in its technical dimensions. Subsequent speakers also questioned the impact that previous streamlining exercises had actually had on the Assembly's efficiency and effectiveness, suggesting that it might be useful to conduct a study of their impact on the Assembly's work.

54. Regarding the implementation of resolutions, there was unanimity that this was an issue of great importance in the revitalization of the General Assembly. Some speakers underscored the need for political will to be shown in this context,

but others pointedly wondered whether or not one of the main obstacles to implementation was the "implementability" of many of the provisions contained in resolutions, including those on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly itself.

55. Turning to the question of high-level meetings and their scheduling, an issue first raised in the Working Group at the sixty-fifth session, one group of States emphasized that organizational and procedural aspects should be looked into very carefully and that the role of the General Committee and the President of the General Assembly should be further explored in this regard. Another group of States noted that a majority of high-level meetings dealt with issues of utmost importance to developing countries, but signalled openness to consider proposals aimed at strengthening the visibility of the various Assembly events. One delegation pointedly asserted that the convening of too many high-level meetings, particularly in too tight a time frame, would undermine their value.

56. Regarding balloting, one group of States showed particular interest in the manner in which improved technologies could be harnessed to make the process of elections in the General Assembly more efficient. Another group of States, however, cautioned that the requirements of security and confidentiality had not yet been fully addressed, a point that was reiterated by a number of subsequent speakers. One delegation strongly emphasized that the question of voting and balloting technology in the context of the capital master plan should be considered in the Fifth Committee, in the light of the budgetary implications of the question.

57. One group of States thought that additional measures could be taken to improve the quality and the accuracy of documents in the six official languages, reiterating also the need to improve their timely issuance after adoption. It also, however, noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Secretariat to reduce the distribution of the paper version of official documents to Permanent Missions, suggesting that the savings achieved could be used to further improve their quality.

### The role and responsibility of the General Assembly in the selection and the appointment of the Secretary-General, as well as in the selection of candidatures for other executive heads of the United Nations system

58. The remainder of the fourth meeting of the Working Group focused on the role of the General Assembly in the selection and the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as in the selection of candidates for other executive head posts in the United Nations system. Nine delegations, including two speaking on behalf of groups of States, intervened to present their positions on these issues.

59. One group of States underlined the utmost importance of the role of the General Assembly in the selection of the Secretary-General becoming more active, effective and efficient, in accordance with the provisions of resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301 and 65/315. This group was of the view that the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, had assumed too large powers in this matter over the years, thereby encroaching on the role of the General Assembly in this matter. This was in part due to an interpretation of resolution 11 (I) that favoured the Security Council, the provisions of which had been partly amended or superseded by later resolutions. This same group suggested that one possible means of ameliorating this situation could be to encourage the President of the General

Assembly to consult with Member States in order to identify and endorse candidates that could be forwarded to the Security Council. It also suggested that formal presentation of candidates before the General Assembly could allow for an effective and useful interaction with Member States. Several speakers aligned themselves with this position, some pointing out that it was the position of the majority of the Member States. A number of speakers suggested that resolution 11 (I) was the product of a bygone era, arguing that subsequent resolutions on this issue needed to be implemented fully and faithfully. One speaker suggested including a decision in the draft resolution to be developed by the Working Group in the course of the current session to the effect that the General Assembly would in the future not consider a recommendation from the Security Council if the provisions of relevant resolutions were not implemented.

60. Another group of States attached paramount importance to the full implementation of the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter, rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and General Assembly resolutions 11 (I), 51/241 and 60/286 in this context, while nonetheless continuing to share the view that the selection process needed to be transparent and inclusive of all Member States. This group believed that the President of the General Assembly could play a constructive role in the process, in particular by consulting with Member States, and that the process could be facilitated by the presentation of candidatures in a manner that allowed for sufficient time for interaction with Member States. One delegation pointed to existing provisions in resolution 51/241 that could be made use of in this regard and considered it useful to review the lessons learned from past experience in anticipation of the next appointment process. Noting that the role of the Secretary-General had considerably expanded in the light of increasing global challenges, another speaker stressed the importance of ensuring that the Secretary-General had the widest possible support. Accordingly, it argued, the selection process should be based on harmony and consensus.

61. A subsequent speaker suggested that, where procedures were sufficient, no change needed to be made. In this regard, it suggested, the Charter was very clear in describing an uncomplicated process for the selection and the appointment of the Secretary-General, one that was successful in ensuring a viable candidate. This speaker further reiterated that the General Assembly and Security Council were co-equal principal organs. Another speaker similarly indicated its readiness to look at ways to improving the existing procedures, while also stressing that any initiative must be strictly based on the Charter provisions.

62. Regarding the appointment processes for other executive heads of the United Nations system, a group of States acknowledged the recommendations contained in the relevant report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2009/8). However, another group of States, in taking note of the same report, also took the opportunity to reaffirm strongly its understanding that, in the light of Article 97 of the Charter, the selection processes for the Secretary-General and those for other executive heads were fundamentally different.

### Functions of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including strengthening its institutional memory and its relationship with the Secretariat

63. The fifth meeting of the Working Group, held on 1 June 2012, focused on the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the

General Assembly. A total of 11 representatives made statements presenting their positions, including on behalf of two groups of States. At the outset of the meeting, the Working Group heard briefings by the Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly and the Executive Office of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management on the funding and staffing of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. The Director of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council Affairs Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management also clarified the latest status on technological developments regarding balloting as provided by the Department for Management.

64. The Chef de Cabinet noted that, in the light of the Assembly's continuously growing workload from session to session, which now filled the full calendar year, and the President's responsibility to promote the public visibility of the General Assembly through outreach activities, which entailed travel beyond Headquarters, adequate human and financial resources were essential for the presidency to effectively discharge its duties. These included moving forward the General Assembly agenda and leading and facilitating follow-up processes. Noting the diverse nature of the current staff of the Office, which was both gender-balanced and representative of all regions of the world, the Chef de Cabinet pointed out the contributions received from some Member States in the form of secondments, as well as the considerable support received from Qatar. He found it surprising that, at a time when the overall budget of the Organization had increased, the level of resources allocated to the Office had remained unchanged since 1998. While a Trust Fund had been established in support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, it had not received any contributions during the sixty-sixth session. The Office thus faced grave financial difficulties, particularly during the remainder of its term, despite the significant contributions of Qatar, with its regular budget thus depleted. While the General Assembly, in resolution 66/246, had reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to submit proposals to review the Office's resource allocation in the 2014-2015 budget cycle, it was to be hoped that the Assembly would take adequate measures, at least to match the evolution of the regular budget and by assigning additional posts. Regarding institutional memory, the transition between presidencies was of great importance, as were proper documentation and archiving of the records of the Office. The Chef de Cabinet also suggested the possibility of retaining some staff from one session to the next, particularly in the light of some mandates extending beyond a single session. He also welcomed the idea of harnessing the expertise of other presidencies through the use of a troika of presidents.

65. The Executive Officer of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management subsequently, pursuant to resolution 65/315, paragraph 26, provided a report on the staffing and funding of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. She indicated that the Office staffing included five posts in the Office itself, four in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Spokesperson provided by the Department of Public Information, two Security Officers provided by the Department of Safety and Security, the President's car and driver, legal services and counsel provided by the Office of Legal Affairs, equipment provided by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, and premises of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

Financial support included the $250,000 mandated since 1998 (which, with adjustment for inflation ("recosting"), currently amounted to slightly more than $300,000). The use of these funds was at the discretion of the President of the General Assembly, but they were often used to cover travel, hospitality and overtime. At the same time, a Trust Fund had been established in 2010 to accept voluntary contributions in support of the Office and its work. These funds, however, were often earmarked for specific events or activities, and they usually needed to be used in the same session in which they were contributed. The Executive Officer also confirmed that no contributions to the Trust Fund had been made during the sixty-sixth session.

66. In response to a previous request for an update from the Secretariat regarding whether there had been any new technological developments with regard to balloting technology, the Working Group was informed by the Director of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Affairs Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management that technological developments in general terms had not substantially changed so as to correspond to the criteria listed in resolution 65/315, paragraph 19, namely the need to ascertain the credibility, the reliability and the confidentiality of the balloting process.

67. In their general statements, Member States focused on the question of the human and financial resources allocated to the Office of the President, as well as on other areas that could serve to improve its institutional memory, such as proper archiving of documentation and lessons learned reports.

68. One group of States, pointing out the continuously expanding workload of the Presidents of the General Assembly over recent years, expressed concern over what it characterized as the non-implementation of the provisions of resolutions 64/301 and 65/315, in which the Secretary-General had been requested to submit proposals to review the budget allocation of the Office of the President. This concern was also voiced by several delegations speaking in their national capacity. One of these pointed to the need for increased resources from within the regular budget, so as not to affect the credibility and the impartiality of the post of the President of the General Assembly by making him dependent on other sources of funding, and also so as not to discourage countries that lack financial resources from presenting a candidate for the post of President. Another speaker specifically recalled the response received in the Fifth Committee when the issue was raised there last year, namely, that the Controller had contacted the then-President, who had responded that an increase in the resources of the Office was not necessary for improved performance of the presidency. As a result of that response, no proposals had been made. Given this, the delegation wondered whether the views of the Office of the President were required in preparation of the budget process, as the General Assembly had already requested the Secretariat to submit specific proposals.

69. In response to this question, the Executive Officer stressed that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had exercised due diligence by communicating the specific mandate, when it was adopted, in a note from the Under-Secretary-General to the then-Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General. She further noted that, during the preparation of the budget for 2012-2013, the then-President had been approached through the Office of the Secretary-General, inviting any such recommendations. The response received from the Office of the President of the sixty-fifth session was that it was not felt that any additional

resources were needed for the successful conduct of the duties of the Office, and so none were requested. The matter would be brought to the attention of the Controller, possibly to determine a more appropriate course of action in anticipation of the following budget exercise, which would take place during the fourth quarter of 2012, for the 2014-2015 biennium.

70. A group of States further underlined the need to assign additional posts to the Office of the President on a permanent basis, including the strict implementation of mandates related to the assignment of a spokesperson and assistant for the President. Similarly, it felt that expenses related to security placed an extra burden on the Office's limited resources. It also requested the allocation of adequate space for the Office of the President in the North Lawn Building and, upon its move back into the Headquarters, in that building as well.

71. Another group of States, for its part, noted the importance of improving the institutional memory of the Office to ensure coherence and continuity in the activities of the General Assembly, and also noted with appreciation all the measures that had already been taken in this regard. The group considered it essential that the Office be allocated dedicated staff from within the Secretariat, within agreed resources, and argued that the improvement of existing processes and staffing arrangements would allow the President to exercise his role more effectively. It also welcomed the support provided by the Secretariat so far regarding proper protocol and security services and adequate office space. A subsequent speaker similarly focused on institutional memory, underscoring the need to reinforce it in an efficient and cost-effective manner. A number of delegations specifically cited *The PGA Handbook* as a welcome initiative in this regard. Another delegation underscored the importance of continuing to analyse measures and procedures that could maximize the utilization of existing human and financial resources. Yet another suggested that it was important to review and examine what had been improved to date through the addition of staff. It also suggested assessing how large a staff would be needed to manage the work of the Office efficiently on the basis of a thorough study of job descriptions in order to ensure the desired gain in productivity.

72. A subsequent delegation underlined its support for pragmatic improvements in the work of the Office of the President and supported many of the ideas that had already been put forward, including providing lessons learned briefings from one presidency to the next; setting deadlines for mandates adopted by the General Assembly and for working groups established by it; reducing the number of items on the agenda of the Assembly; rationalizing meeting schedules to allow all delegations to follow the work of the General Assembly; undertaking transparent consultations between the General Assembly and the Security Council; and exchanging views, at the outset of the session, among the heads of the principal organs. Another speaker insisted that any proposal for increasing the resources allocated to the Office of the President should be considered in accordance with the existing rules of procedure, specifically in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and in the Fifth Committee. Consideration of better use of existing resources was also proposed. The speaker recalled the difficult discussions that had taken place in the Fifth Committee during the consideration of the budget for 2012-2013. It suggested that another option would be to examine additional use of Secretariat resources, as was done with regard to the Security Council.

73. With regard to balloting technology, a group of States expressed the concern that none of the systems presented during previous sessions appeared to meet the Assembly's requirements regarding reliability, credibility, integrity and confidentiality. It also stressed that the development of electronic devices related to the voting and balloting systems within the framework of the capital master plan could not be invoked in itself to urge Member States to adopt these systems. Another group of States, however, emphasized the importance of improving the existing balloting system and the need to adapt it to modern technologies that would contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the working methods of the General Assembly. A subsequent speaker was also of the view that the General Assembly could benefit from new technologies, while underlining the need to guard the confidentiality and reliability of any new system.

# III. Conclusions

74. In accordance with its mandate, the Working Group endeavoured to identify key issues of concern and possible consensus, to examine the current status of implementation of those issues, and to either take action or indicate possible further action to be taken on them.

75. At its sixth meeting, held on 11 September 2012, the Working Group considered and adopted a draft resolution (see paragraph 77 below) and the present report.

# IV. Recommendations

76. On the basis of a draft resolution circulated by the Co-Chairs, the Ad Hoc Working Group developed the resolution set out below.

77. At its sixth meeting, on 11 September 2012, the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly concluded its work for the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Working Group decided to recommend that the General Assembly adopt the following draft resolution:

## Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

*The General Assembly*,

*Reaffirming* its previous resolutions relating to the revitalization of its work, including resolutions 46/77 of 12 December 1991, 47/233 of 17 August 1993, 48/264 of 29 July 1994, 51/241 of 31 July 1997, 52/163 of 15 December 1997, 55/14 of 3 November 2000, 55/285 of 7 September 2001, 56/509 of 8 July 2002, 57/300 of 20 December 2002, 57/301 of 13 March 2003, 58/126 of 19 December 2003, 58/316 of 1 July 2004, 59/313 of 12 September 2005, 60/286 of 8 September 2006, 61/292 of 2 August 2007, 62/276 of 15 September 2008, 63/309 of 14 September 2009, 64/301 of 13 September 2010 and 65/315 of 12 September 2011,

*Stressing* the importance of the implementation of resolutions of the General Assembly on the revitalization of its work, and noting with concern their lack of implementation and impact on the authority, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Assembly,

*Recognizing* the role of the General Assembly in addressing issues of peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

*Reaffirming* the role and authority of the General Assembly on global matters of concern to the international community, including global governance, as set out in the Charter,

*Welcoming* the decision of the President of the General Assembly to designate "United Nations reform and revitalization" as one of the pillars of his presidency during the sixty-sixth session,

*Welcoming also* the decision of the President of the General Assembly to designate "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means" as the theme of the general debate at its sixty-sixth session,

*Recognizing* the need to further enhance the role, the authority, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the General Assembly,

*Underlining* the need for full implementation of the resolutions establishing language arrangements for the official languages of the United Nations and the working languages of the Secretariat, as a basis for an effective, efficient and inclusive Assembly,

*Reaffirming* the importance for the Secretariat to redouble its efforts for the full implementation of section VIII of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

*Noting* the important role and activities of the Office of the President of the General Assembly,

*Reiterating* that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the overall reform of the United Nations,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly;

2. *Decides* to establish, at its sixty-seventh session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, open to all Member States:

(*a*) To identify further ways to enhance the role, the authority, the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on the progress achieved in past General Assembly sessions, as well as on previous resolutions and evaluating the status of their implementation;

(*b*) To submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session;

3. *Also decides* that the Ad Hoc Working Group shall continue its review of the inventory of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization annexed to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group submitted at the sixty-third session, and, as a result, issue an updated version of the inventory to be attached to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group at the sixty-seventh session, and also requests the

Secretary-General to submit an update on the provisions of the Assembly resolutions on revitalization addressed to the Secretariat for implementation that have not been implemented, with an indication of the constraints and reasons behind any lack of implementation, for further consideration by the Ad Hoc Working Group at the sixty-seventh session;

**Role and authority of the General Assembly**

4. *Reaffirms* the role and authority of the General Assembly, including on questions relating to international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 10 to 14 and 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, where appropriate, using the procedures set forth in rules 7 to 10 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, which enable swift and urgent action by the Assembly, bearing in mind that the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter;

5. *Takes note* of recent developments in the General Assembly with regard to responses to emerging challenges and current events of common concern to the international community, and stresses the need for the General Assembly to further actively undertake its role regarding those challenges and events and respond effectively;

6. *Welcomes* the initiative taken by the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations for the sixty-sixth session to identify the peaceful settlement of disputes as one of the main areas of focus and selecting "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means" as the main theme for the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly;

7. *Welcomes* the holding of thematic debates on current issues of critical importance to the international community and their interactive inclusive character, and invites the President of the General Assembly to continue this practice and to consult with Member States on the possibilities for achieving, where appropriate, results-oriented outcomes in such debates;

8. *Recognizes* the importance and the benefit of continuing interaction between the General Assembly and international or regional forums and organizations dealing with global matters of concern to the international community in the perspective of the revitalization of the work of the Assembly;

9. *Welcomes* the continued practice of holding periodic informal briefings by the Secretary-General on his priorities, travels and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations, and encourages him to continue with this practice;

10. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring increased cooperation, coordination and exchange of information among the principal organs, and welcomes the holding of regular meetings of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session with the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, and briefings to Member States on the outcomes of these meetings on a regular basis, and encourages the continuation of such practice;

11. *Welcomes* the improvements that have been made in the quality of the annual reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly, encourages the

Council to make further improvements as necessary, and takes note of the holding of informal meetings of the President of the Council with all Member States before the preparation of the report;

12. *Notes* that, in accordance with Article 15 and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter, the Security Council shall submit to the General Assembly an annual report and, when necessary, special reports for its consideration;

13. *Recognizes* that non-implementation of various General Assembly resolutions, in particular those adopted by consensus, may diminish the role and authority of the Assembly, and underlines the important role and responsibility of Member States in their implementation;

14. *Urges* the Secretariat to continue its efforts to raise the visibility of the General Assembly, reaffirms paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 60/286 and decides that the announcements about the work of the principal organs of the United Nations should appear in the *Journal of the United Nations* in the order stipulated in Article 7 of the Charter of the United Nations;

15. *Also urges* the Secretariat to disseminate, in addition to the current practice of e-mail, transmission of important official letters and notifications to all Permanent Missions through fax messages;

**Working methods**

16. *Welcomes* the briefings by the Chairs of the Main Committees who briefed the Ad Hoc Working Group on their discussions on working methods held in their respective Committees during the sixty-sixth session;

17. *Welcomes* the convening by the President of the General Assembly at the sixty-sixth session of a brainstorming session on the working methods of the Fifth Committee;

18. *Requests* that the General Assembly and its Main Committees, at the sixty-seventh session, in consultation with Member States, continue consideration of and make proposals for the further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the agenda of the Assembly, taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group, including through the introduction of a sunset clause, with the clear consent of the sponsoring State or States;

19. *Encourages* each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods at the sixty-seventh session, and invites the Chairs of the Main Committees, at the sixty-seventh session, to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group, as appropriate, on the discussions on the working methods;

20. *Notes with appreciation* that the high-level meetings held at the United Nations give more visibility to very important topics, while mindful of the need to facilitate full participation of all Member States and to preserve the integrity of the general debate in September, and reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Chairs of the Main Committees, in consultation with Member States, to enhance the coordination of the scheduling of high-level meetings with a view to optimizing the number and distribution of such events;

21. *Encourages* Member States, United Nations bodies and the Secretariat to continue to consult on the consolidation of documentation in order to avoid duplication of work, to exercise the fullest possible discipline in striving for concise resolutions, reports and other documentation, inter alia, by referring to previous documents, rather than repeating actual content, and to focus on key themes, and calls on them to observe existing submission deadlines so as to allow for the timely processing of documents to be examined by intergovernmental bodies;

22. *Recalls* its resolution 66/81 of 9 December 2011, which noted the efforts of the Department of Public Information to continue to publicize the work and decisions of the General Assembly, and requested the Department to continue to enhance its working relationship with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and stresses the importance of further enhancing public and media awareness of the work and decisions of the General Assembly, including through their timely issuance and distribution in all official languages;

23. *Encourages* Member States to make full use of the e-services provided by the Secretariat, taking into account the cost savings and the reduced environmental impact that may accrue from this exercise, in order to improve the quality and distribution of documents;

24. *Decides* that the Ad Hoc Working Group shall remain apprised of options for more time-effective, efficient and secure balloting, reiterating the need to ascertain the credibility, the reliability and the confidentiality of the balloting process, and requests the Secretariat to submit an update in case of any new technological developments, on the understanding that the adoption of any new balloting system in the future will require a decision of the plenary of the General Assembly;

**Selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads**

25. *Reaffirms its commitment* to continue, in the Ad Hoc Working Group, in accordance with the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter, its consideration of the revitalization of the role of the General Assembly in the selection and the appointment of the Secretary-General, and calls for the full implementation of all relevant resolutions, including resolutions 11 (I), 51/241, 60/286, in particular paragraphs 17 to 22 of the annex thereto, and 64/301;

26. *Recognizes* that the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General differs from the process used with regard to other executive heads in the United Nations system, given the role of the Security Council in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter, and re-emphasizes the need for the process of selection of the Secretary-General to be transparent and inclusive of all Member States;

27. *Takes note* of the recommendation contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the selection and conditions of service of executive heads in the United Nations system organizations proposing that the General Assembly conduct hearings or meetings with candidates running for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations;

**Strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly**

28. *Welcomes* the views expressed by the President and the Office of the President of the General Assembly to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the Assembly and its relationship with the Secretariat;

29. *Also welcomes* the periodic briefings by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session to Member States on his recent activities, including official travels, and encourages the continuation of such practice;

30. *Further welcomes* the measures already undertaken to strengthen the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, proposals to review the budget allocation to the Office of the President of the General Assembly in accordance with existing procedures;

32. *Notes* that the activities of the President of the General Assembly have increased markedly in recent years, recalls provisions regarding support for the Office of the President of the General Assembly in previous resolutions, expresses continued interest in seeking ways to further support the Office, in accordance with existing procedures, in particular rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and, in this context, looks forward to the submission by the Secretary-General of his proposals pursuant to paragraph 32 of resolution 66/246;

33. *Underlines* the importance of the contributions of Member States to the Trust Fund in support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, notes, in this regard, that no contributions were made to the Fund during the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly and invites Member States to consider contributing to the Fund;

34. *Requests* the Secretary-General, at the sixty-seventh session, to report on the funding and staffing of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including on any technical, logistical, protocol-related or financial questions;

35. *Notes* the concerns raised on the protocol arrangements in place for the President of the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to further endeavour to ensure, within agreed resources, that the President is provided with proper protocol and security services and adequate office space, with a view to enabling the President to carry out his or her functions in a manner commensurate with the dignity and stature of the Office;

36. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure, within agreed resources, that the Office of the President of the General Assembly is allocated dedicated staff within the Secretariat with responsibility for coordinating the transition between Presidents, managing interactions between the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General and the retention of institutional memory, and requests the outgoing Presidents of the Assembly to brief their successors on the lessons learned and best practices.